

## Dirty Little Secrets

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Summary: "The one thing I've learned is that everybody has secrets. Everybody gathered here has dirty little secrets. And some of them, now some of them really are just that. Dirty little secrets. Harmless, painless, ones no one really needs to know. But there are those secrets, those huge secrets that are very, very harmful and very, very painful." AU. Inspired by a fan trailer.

## Dirty Little Secrets

**\_\*\*Dirty Little Secrets\*\*\_**

**\*\*ATTENTION\*\***

**\*\*THIS IDEA WAS NOT SOLELY MINE. THIS WAS INSPIRED BY THE DOOFENSHMARK TRAILER "WHAT IF HICCUP AND TOOTHLESS WERE THE VILLAINS". Thank you. \*\***

**\*\*Anyway, I saw the trailer and just had to write something, so have a superlong one-shot! :D \*\***

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><p>Astrid Hofferson strolled along the streets of Berk, examining her axe in an absent manner as she went. Her dragon training lesson was long over, but the incident in training today still hadn't faded from her mind. How could Hiccup, shy, weak, runty, useless Hiccup have bested her in training? Her. Astrid Hofferson. She was the best Viking of her age. She was born to be picked to kill her first dragon in front of the entire village. How in the hell had he managed to beat her?<p>

She continued to fume to herself as she remembered his cocky smirk as he strode out of the arena. How dare he think himself actually worth anything just because of a little luck in the ring!

No, the blonde reminded herself. It wasn't luck. It was cheating. Whatever had happened had happened overnight, and things like that just didn't. She was sure that something had happened. He was training with someone, maybe Gobber? The blacksmith had always favored the redhead over the other kids in the village, that much was clear. She scowled as she thought of it, slipping into the forest at the edge of the trees. She knew better than to hope that Hiccup would even be here " he had disappeared in here two hours ago, after the training lesson, and though she still hadn't seen him emerge, he had an irritatingly short attention span, and would have left here long ago.

But why was he always slipping off into the forest? Why was he constantly sneaking away after every lesson, claiming he had somewhere to be?

Doubt filled her mind. Was he training with someone? Gobber was definitely a suspect, but he couldn't be pegged as the definite answer, not yet. Astrid refused to believe a great Viking like the blonde blacksmith could ever sink so low as helping the village screw-up cheat to win himself some respect.

That was the only way he ever would win himself respect, she reminded herself furiously. How was he getting so good? And why was he being so cocky about it? She could have handled it had it been Fishlegs or one of the twins. Fishlegs was actually pretty nice, sometimes. A little on the weak side, but not a runt by any means, and nowhere near as bad as Hiccup. He would have handled his victories with dignity, and directed the attention towards long hours poring over the Dragon Book. He would have been nice enough about it. Nice might not have been a typical Viking trait, but Astrid didn't mind that Fishlegs was it.

She quickened her pace a bit, looking for her special ring of trees where she spent almost all her time practicing nowadays. How was Hiccup getting so good? She wondered for the umpteenth time that day, feeling a wave of frustration wash over her again. But it was no good merely wondering about it. She had to find out, to see what was going on with him. Astrid Hofferson was not an idle girl.

She pushed on through the forest, making herself a promise. If she didn't notice anything that could give away Hiccup's secret by tomorrow, after the training lesson, she would tail him once again. This time, she wouldn't let him out of her sight. And she would either find out where he was going by herself, or she would get it out of him somehow. He looked weak, like a good axe on the groin would cripple him for life. She could extract the information from him easily, and then everything would work out once more. She would tell Gobber that he was training with someone, once she had her proof and Hiccup's confession, and then the red-haired boy would simply melt back into the shadows once more, forgotten, shamed and disgraced, as usual. Everything would work out perfectly.

\* \* \*

><p>At least, that's what she had thought twenty-four hours ago, safe in her own little world of axe-throwing and Hiccup training with someone and nothing at all remotely interesting or dangerous or unpredictable happening on Berk, just the regular dragon raids which were so routine they now almost bored her. She expected them, and

they came. It was as simple as that.<p>

She did not expect this. She had not expected Hiccup being so hard to follow, for one thing " for Thor's sake, he must have doubled back at least ten times to make sure he wasn't being followed!

But she was stealthy, and she was patient. Better than him, better in every way. And so she followed him without complaint, without making a sound, and she did it. She made it to the place where he must be meeting up with his dragon-killing mentor. But why wasn't there anyone there? Why wasn't "what was "why was that shadow moving? Why "?

Thor.

That was no shadow. That "was a dragon.

Screams built in Astrid's throat when she realized it, her heart thumping so loudly in her chest that she expected Hiccup to look up and hear.

"You know, Toothless," Hiccup mused as the dragon frolicked, surprisingly playfully, around the boy, "I'm thinking it's time for you to meet the village."

The moment the last word left his lips, the Night Fury was all business. Placing his ears flat against his head, he lowered his sleek body to the ground and growled softly in the back of his throat.

"Yeah, I know, bud," Hiccup sighed, giving the dragon an affectionate pat on the nose. "I know you hate them. Understandably, I mean, I do, too."

These words shouldn't have surprised Astrid, but they did. She hadn't really thought that Hiccup hated them "had she? Why would he? They fed him. They clothed him. They gave him a warm place to sleep, a roof over his head. By all accounts, he should have been grateful that they were still housing the unwanted runt, on Stoick the Vast's orders.

"But think of it this way," Hiccup knelt down next to the dragon, taking the scaly black chin in his hands. It was alarming for Astrid to see how familiar they were with each other, how comfortably they touched each other, without fear of injury or betrayal at the other's hands. "I show you to the village, and we're free. You want to be free, don't you, Toothless?" He scratched lightly under the dragon's chin, eliciting a soft purr from the creature. "And you want me to be free, too, right?"

The dragon blinked forest green eyes up at the auburn-haired boy, and he purred in confirmation.

"See? Everything will work out fine."

Astrid couldn't think. She didn't know what to do, what to say, where to go. The village? What if Hiccup and the dragon heard her footsteps as she ran away? They would surely catch her before she made it " Night Furies were known for being one of the fastest breeds. She tried backing away, watching carefully where she placed her feet. It

would be just her luck if she happened to step back on a twig just now and crack it, but there were no twigs in sight; nothing but damp, mossy ground.

She watched the strange pair for a bit of time, trying to slide, unseen, back into the shadows, avoiding detection like her life depended on it, which it did. If either one of them spotted her now, she'd be dead meat. Creatures like that Night Fury knew no mercy, and Hiccup seemed like he might possibly be mentally unstable. She continued to back away and eventually, when she got to the thicker trees, she chanced it and began running, as fast as she could, not caring how many twigs she cracked. She didn't even care if Hiccup and the dragon heard her, she didn't care if she screamed while she ran. She had been standing still, controlling her fear for far too long. It felt good just to run, to give in to her instincts.

But for the first time in her life, as she burst through the final line of trees and out into the village streets, Astrid Hofferson didn't know what to do. And she always knew what to do, in any given situation. But for the first time, she hesitated. Should she tell Stoick? Would he even believe such a ludicrous claim? What about Gobber? The man had a soft spot for his apprentice; surely he wouldn't believe the accusations. But Hiccup's sudden skill in dragon training had to come from somewhere, she reasoned with herself. And now she knew just that somewhere. And Gobber should, too.

She ran firstly to the forge, her legs pumping harder than ever beneath her, her crimson, spiked skirt flapping about her thighs. By the time she actually reached the smithy, her heart was pounding furiously in her chest, and sweat was beading on her forehead. She pushed open the door to the old wooden building, praying that Gobber would be here. Her legs were trembling beneath her, and she wasn't even sure if she could stand anymore, though her sudden exhaustion was not from the physical exertion. She was still in shock over what she had seen, more than anything, and she could not get over it.

"Gobber!" Astrid panted, barreling farther into the darkened forge, squinting madly to try and catch sight of the blacksmith.

"I'm here, lass!" His voice echoed from behind the tattered red curtain. She had always been kind of curious as to what was behind that curtain, but as she had never really asked and Gobber had never shown her, she'd assumed it just wasn't important. She didn't bother to ask if she was allowed back; she just threw herself into the room and collapsed, quaking, into the nearest chair.

"Hello, Astrid," Gobber's mustache twitched when he spotted the blonde. "Need your axe sharpened again, I bet? Good thing, too â€" work is trickling in so slowly todayâ€"!"

"No, Gobber." Her voice sounded cold and distant, but she didn't bother trying to change it. "I need to talk to you. It's really important."

Gobber had never particularly liked these words, especially when said together. What was so important that Astrid had come running to him in the forge, to speak with him in private? He picked up the hammer he had come in here looking for, and shuffled a few of the drawings left on his apprentice's desk. He had never really paid much

attention to Hiccup's drawings before, but it was clear that the boy had a lot of skill, and he was brilliant.

"Alright," he said nervously, forcing himself back into the present. "What's goin' on, lass?"

"It'sâ€¦it's about Hiccup." She seemed to have trouble catching her breath, as if she had been running all the way here.

Understanding dawned suddenly. Astrid Hofferson, running to him at sunset to tell him something about his apprentice? This could only mean one thingâ€¦ "Say no more!" he burst out excitedly. "I know exactly what you're about to say!"

"You mean, you knew?" Astrid jumped to her feet suddenly, her blue eyes becoming that much colder. "You knew, and you didn't say anything? Not to me, not to Stoick â€" that's his \_son\_, by the way, Stoick deserves to knowâ€"!"

"Of course I knew!" Gobber interrupted jubilantly. "How could I even pretend not to? Hiccup's made it painfully obvious, lass â€" I'm surprised you've just now caught on!"

Astrid stopped mid-sentence, trying not to feel too offended by this. So apparently the whole village had known, and nobody had thought to tell her?

"Hiccup's always staring out his window at you, always moping around â€" I knew it was a girl, and the way he talks about you, wellâ€¦by the sound of it, you're like a goddess on earthâ€"

Astrid cut him off before he could embarrass himself, his apprentice, and her any further. "That's not what I'm talking about."

"Wait, you don't like him back?" Gobber seemed very crushed by this news.

"No!" she shook her head vigorously. "Why would I everâ€¦! I meanâ€¦no thank you! Anyway, that's not what I wanted to tell you. I came here toâ€¦toâ€¦" The realization crashed over her again, like a wave of cold saltwater, stinging every inch of her consciousness instead of her skin. "Hiccup. I know why he's getting so good in dragon training now."

"Still on this one, lass?" Gobber looked disappointed. "Lately, that's all you talk about. Last week, you were certain he was training with someone. Now what's your story?"

Her cheeks flushed. "This is the truth. This is really where he's always sneaking off to, Gobberâ€¦Hiccup has somehow managed to control a Night Fury."

The silence that followed was thick and tense.

"Astrid." Gobber's voice was very quiet; there were no affectionate nicknames, and the twinkle had vanished from his brown eyes. "You need to give this up. I admire your determination to catch Hiccup in the act, but I will not have you falsely accusing my apprentice just because he's showing you up in training."

"Whatâ€¦this is not aboutâ€¦! You don't believe me?! Fine! That's fine! Go into the forest and have a look, then! Haven't you even thought why he's stealing all those fish from the Great Hall?"

"He's a growing lad," Gobber responded with a dismissive wave of his hand. "Once a Viking hits the teen years, his appetite does increase dramatically, it's nothing to worry about."

"Why is he working in the forge all hours of the night, then?" Astrid snapped, her blue eyes flashing. "He's up to something, and it definitely involves a Night Fury, because that's what I saw with him in the forest today!"

"Give it up," Gobber's tone rose in pitch and volume, and his look was fast becoming a glare. "Leave him alone. If you're angry with him, that's something you two need to settle between yourselves. Leave me and the lies out of this."

"It's notâ€¦whatâ€¦weâ€¦Gobber! I'm being serious, you should have seenâ€¦"

Suddenly, there was a great roar; it shook the tiny smithy, it rocked Astrid, sending her tumbling to the ground. It shook the desk, sending papers scattering. When one of them fluttered close to the ground beside her, Astrid saw a crude drawing of a saddle and harness combo, and the anger built within her again. Hiccup was practically leaving people a trail of clues, almost like he wanted them to guess, and still everybody else was too dim to get it?

"Another raid, I suppose," Gobber muttered, frowning at the ceiling. "Grab your weapons, lass! It's time to fight again!"

He shouldered the door to the forge open, only to let out a cry of shock and horror and jump backward about ten feet; a flaming tree was almost completely blocking the doorway. Astrid heard an unmistakable screech, and then the cry that she knew would follow, the cry that had always followed: "Night Fury!"

"Get down!" Gobber bellowed, throwing himself to the ground and reaching out a massive hand, sending Astrid back onto her stomach. She struggled just to breathe as a thick, choking gray smoke clouded her lungs, making her eyes water. She coughed, gasping for breath, sitting up on her knees. Between death by dragon and death by suffocation, she now knew which one she would choose.

There came another roar, another screech, and she heard part of the forge crash down somewhere beside her. She screamed in fear, throwing herself backward and curling into the tightest ball she could manage, trying to protect her head.

And then came a voice. A voice that she had spent fourteen years hating, fourteen years wishing that that stupid, nasally voice would just go away. And now there was no escape from it, for she was trapped in a pile of burning wood and choking smoke, and it was boring into her head, as she knew it was boring into Gobber's, and she knew with certainty that the Night Fury up in the clouds was his.

"Look at me!" That seemed to be the words that Hiccup kept screaming and, when Astrid dared peek up from the scattered, smoking debris,

she saw Hiccup wheeling about in the sky, doing outrageously reckless, fancy dives in midair, showing off his skill. The Night Fury snapped his leathery black wings close by his sides, and they went into a near vertical dive, plummeting towards the ground. The underbelly got closer and closer and closer until black was all Astrid could see as claws clenched tight under her arms, dragging her out of the thick flames. Gobber soon followed her, landing in the smoking streets of Berk.

The damage wasn't that bad as of yet, but there were hundreds of dragons circling in the sky, including the elusive Night Fury and the largest thing Astrid had ever seen. The scales were a pale, milky color and she couldn't tell what breed it was supposed to be; she had never seen anything like it.

A crowd began to gather, grabbing weapons from the forge. Hiccup had just sent a Nadder to put out the flames with its wings, and the only danger was that the weapon you grabbed might still be smoking, or slightly singed in places. Astrid readied her battleaxe as Hiccup circled slowly above her.

"You're probably all getting ready to fight me, aren't you? Yes, I see the brave souls who are still bothering to hold their weapons, but see, the thing is â€" it's pointless to try and fight me. I know you're Vikings, and I know you're the stupidest beings alive, but really â€" even you must realize there's no point in fighting. And you â€" the rest of you, I mean â€" can stop looking all afraid and cowering away from me. I have no intention to hurt you. At least, not yet."

He swooped downward suddenly, scattering the crowd like a herd of terrified sheep. A few people screamed, and many more dropped their weapons. Fishlegs fell to his knees, muttering terrified prayers of forgiveness to the great god Thor. But Astrid knew it wasn't Thor whom they needed forgiveness from.

Hiccup laughed quietly as he rose back up into the air, the chuckle detached, amused and cruel, all at the same time. "Let's review the last fourteen years, shall we? A brief overview of the very recent history on the island of Berk. Because the one thing I've learned is that everybody has secrets. Everybody gathered here has dirty little secrets. And some of them, now some of them really are just that. Dirty little secrets. Harmless, painless, ones no one really needs to know. But there are those secrets, those huge secrets that are very, very harmful and very, very painful. Secrets that everybody needs to know. Secrets that are dirtier than you might expect."

If Astrid had been in shock when she'd discovered Hiccup in the forest, that was nothing to how she felt now. She could barely breathe for fear and shock. What was Hiccup even doing here, showing Toothless off to the whole village? And why did he have all these dragons with him? She had a horrible feeling that she was going to find out all too soon.

"Let's start with somebody we're all familiar with," Hiccup's voice continued from way up above her, in the sky, still with that edge of cruel amusement. "My father. You might know him as Stoick the Vast, the great and trusted leader of our village. Me? I know him as the man who beat me so badly once that I could barely move the next day. The man who tells me, every goddamn day of my pathetic life, how much

he doesn't want me, how much he wishes that he'd just left me on the mountainside or set me out to sea to let Thor take care of me."

Astrid cut her eyes to Stoick briefly; the man was glaring up into the clouds, but he looked shocked and scandalized. What Hiccup was saying couldn't be true. It had to be a lie.

"This is also the man who, the day I shot down this wonderful Night Fury hereâ€¦" Hiccup sounded pleased with himself when he spoke. "This is the man who never believed me about it. He didn't even go and check the forest, even when I insisted. What faith, Dad. Really. What faith you had in me, what faith you still have in me. It touches my heart. I was really feeling the love when you took me home and beat the living hell out of me."

He was lying. He had to be. That was the only way Astrid could justify his words, was if they were lies.

Still, they made her head spin. She turned to look at Stoick the Vast again, but she could see his fierce anger building, and she didn't want to let herself believe anything that Hiccup saidâ€¦

She cut her gaze to the sky again, where Hiccup's voice was still emanating. "Number two," he continued, "Snotlout Jorgenson. My cousin. You guys might know him as a pretty fun, maybe a little stupid but all-around cool guy. He is my personal tormentor, and he was born to bring me hell on earth. Not a day goes by that I don't hear from him what I'm doing wrong. I'm too small â€" tell me something I don't know. I'm too short â€" yeah, that's what everyone says. And you know, the really funny thing about this is â€" it's not even a secret. My cousin doesn't even keep this a secret. He's been doing this for years, right out in the open. And notâ€¦aâ€¦singleâ€¦oneâ€¦ofâ€¦youâ€¦intervened." His voice was quiet, the pauses deadly.

"Oh, but it's perfectly fine, of course!" He went on in a mock cheerful voice. "Because Hiccup can take it, no, Hiccup deserves it, he's the runt! He's just a useless mistake and he can handle a little light teasing! Well, guess what I think of that! Guess what I think of all of you!"

Fire rained down, seemingly from the sky, blasting one of the buildings. The people nearest it screamed, ducking for cover. Stoick was one of the few who didn't flinch.

"That's what I think of all of you!" Hiccup screamed down at them. "That's what's going to happen to all of you, to all of you who keep huge, ugly secrets!"

The twins looked rather excited by this prospect, but Fishlegs crouched ever lower, biting his lip and begging Thor for forgiveness even faster.

"Number three!" Hiccup continued in a hard voice. "Astrid Hofferson!"

Astrid gasped. Her name was not one she expected among them.

"She was once my best friend. Once my only friend. She was the only



person in the whole village who was ever nice to me! The only person! And she left me! She told me that I was a runt! I was only dragging her down! She would never amount to anything if I insisted on clinging to her! That's what she said to me! She deserted me! News flash, Ms. Hofferson " \_real friends don't do that\_!"

Astrid told herself that the tears threatening in her eyes were just droplets from the leftover ash and smoke, but she wasn't that good at convincing herself. Hiccup's words were striking her hard, hitting her harder than she had ever thought possible. She remembered the day that she'd said those words, told him"had she really said that? Had she really said that he was only dragging her down?

"I could go on!" Hiccup yelled from somewhere within the clouds. "I have a whole list! Everyone from the village is on it! Do I need to continue?"

"Hiccup!" Stoick the Vast seemed to have regained the power of speech, and he looked furious. "Get down here, right now!"

"Why?" Hiccup screamed, as more fire began to rain down. "So you can beat me again? I don't think so!"

And then the fire fell faster, as all the dragons, all at once, shot out their power upon the helpless inhabitants of Berk.

End  
file.